

SIMPSON CURSES AT HALL LAWYER; FINGERPRINT FORGERY IS HINTED

Experts Deny Prints on Rector's Card Are Willie's

By JACK MILEY
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SOMERVILLE, N. J., Nov. 23. — A brimstone path, hissed in a flash of ill-concealed passion, sputtered through the court house here today as the apparent crumbling of the state's case continued in the Hall-Mills murder trial.

Livid with anger, Special Prosecutor Alexander Simpson ordered two burly police officers to remove Robert K. Neilson, a defense lawyer, from a seat he had taken, and then, apparently losing control of himself, he vented his spleen thus:—

"That red-headed — — — planted himself right among those jury guards. How does he get that way?"

The words, crackling with vehemence, were plainly audible to those persons seated in the first two rows. There was a scraping of feet, an anxious pause as the hearers leaned forward for the next move in this unexpected drama being enacted without the knowledge of the two judges on the bench.

Hustled From Court

As they strained their ears, Neilson was hustled from the court room by Capt. Harry Walsh,



MRS. FRANCES HALL

Jersey City policeman, and into the sheriff's office across the hall. Voices raised to a high pitch came to newspaper men and others gathered outside.

A few minutes later, the lawyer returned and sat down behind Willie Stevens, his brother, Henry, and sister, Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall, the three defendants.

In the meantime, news of what had happened spread through the rear tiers of spectators, and friends of Neilson, stung to the quick by the loathing stigma placed on him by Simpson, mumbled that the incident would not end there.

Another sensation was awaiting the curious. This came when a witness, a fingerprint expert, hinted that the mark on the calling card picked up near the bodies of the Rev. Edward W. Hall and Mrs. Eleanor R. Mills—a mark the state has claimed was made by

Willie Stevens Denies Guilt On Stand at Hall Murder Trial

Sleuth Swears "Pig Woman" Failed To Identify Him

SOMERVILLE, N. J., Nov. 23.—Willie Stevens went on the witness stand in his own defense this afternoon.

He followed Capt. James Mason, in charge of the 1922 investigation into the Hall-Mills murders, who dealt the prosecution a smashing blow by testifying Mrs. Jane Gibson declared two men who confronted her in the county prosecutor's office were not the ones she had seen on the Phillips farm. According to Mason, these men in the office were Henry and Willie Stevens.

Senator Case conducted the direct examination of Stevens.

Q. Mr. Stevens, how old are you? A. Forty-four—no, 54.

Q. Have you been living with your sister, Mrs. Hall? A. Yes, sir.

Never Had Fits

Q. Have you ever suffered from epileptic fits? A. No, sir.

Q. At any time prior to or including September, 1922, did you wear a derby hat? A. No, sir.

Q. How long have you been wearing glasses? A. Ever since I was a very young boy.

Q. Now Mr. Stevens, on the night of September 14, 1922, at about 8 o'clock, were you in or near Plainfield? A. No, sir!

Willie was particularly emphatic with his answer. He glared indignantly at Simpson.

Willie Stevens—might be a forgery.

Still another expert, this one in the service of the United States Navy, stated emphatically that the fingerprint on it the card is not that of Willie, that was made by somebody other than the defendant and this testimony was corroborated by a third expert.

Fingerprint Not Willie's

James H. Taylor was the first witness who seemed to tear down the strong wall of evidence which Simpson had sought to erect around the weak-minded defendant.

Plainly nettled by his inability to shake the expert under cross-examination, Simpson happened to spy Neilson seated among the guards in one corner of the room and at once beckoned Inspector John J. Underwood and Capt. Walsh. He whispered an order and both officers moved toward the lawyer, who at first was inclined to treat the incident as a joke.

But Neilson underwent a rapid change of mind when he heard the pseudonym pinned on him by Simpson. His face flushed with resentment, his large frame shook with anger. Only the intercession of other defense counsel could seem to allay his flaring passion.

It was suggested that he lodge with the court a complaint against Simpson, charging conduct unbecoming a member of the bar. But Neilson would have none of it.

Delays Cross-Examination

"This is a personal matter between Simpson and me," he said.

The incident, apparently, had its effect on the special prosecutor who, finding his attack blocked at every turn, asked permission of the court to delay until tomorrow further cross-examination of the fingerprint experts. The request was granted.



WILLIE STEVENS

Q. Have you ever carried a gold watch? A. No, sir!

Q. Or a gold chain? A. No, sir!

Carried Watch for Years

"What sort of watch have you carried all these years?" Willie drew from a vest pocket an enormous, old-fashioned silver watch on an enormous old-fashioned silver chain. Case dangled this thoughtfully then asked, "This is the same watch and chain you have used for years?"

A. "It is, sir."

Q. What church did you attend, Mr. Stevens? A. Christ Church, New Brunswick.

Q. That is an Episcopal church, but not the one of which Dr. Hall was rector? A. That's right, sir.

Q. Did you ever go to the church of St. John the Evangelist? A. Occasionally.

Interrogated by Robert H. McCarter, chief defense counsel, the experts told, one after another, of discrepancies in the print found on the card and those taken from the finger of Willie Stevens. They illustrated their replies by charts and enlarged pictures.

Impugnes Expert's Veracity

During a verbal flareup between counsel for both sides, at one point in the examination of the witnesses, Senator Simpson seized upon another opportunity to vent his feelings on those in charge of the defense.

It was precipitated when Simpson remarked that the witness then on the stand might be willing to "testify to anything."

"I object to that remark on the ground it is indecent," spoke up McCarter.

"But your judgment on indecency isn't worth much, according to the way you have conducted this trial," was the special prosecutor's rejoinder.

At the noon recess, Neilson sent Simpson a note regarding the earlier incident between the pair, but neither would make its contents public. In explaining his own position in the matter, the defense lawyer said:—

"I spoke to no one while at the point objected to. I was merely studying the enlarged calling card. It seems to me the most appropriate comment on the whole thing is 'Evil to him who evil thinks.'"

The usual big crowd was on hand when court opened today and the three defendants were in high spirits as they took their accustomed places. They expressed gratification over the alibis offered in behalf of Henry Stevens.

Photo Made in Jail

Aubrey J. Drummond, a New

York photographer, was called by McCarter as the first witness.

Q. Were you called here to make a photograph of Dr. Hall's calling card? A. I was.

Q. Who was there? A. Drewen, Schwartz and Faurot.

Q. Where was it taken? A. At the jail.

Q. How much is this photograph enlarged? A. 13 1/4 diameters.

Q. When did you make your enlargement? A. At my office in New York, on November 7.

(The defense photograph of the fingerprint which the state says is Willie's is 3 feet wide and 5 feet long.)

Q. Were you alone when you made it? A. I was.

Q. What is the percentage of distortion in the enlargement? Is there 50 per cent.? A. I couldn't say what percentage.

McCarter showed Drummond copies of his own work; the card and Willie's enlarged print. He identified both.

He showed Drummond two more huge prints which he described as "babies." They were copies of card and print, enlarged 180 times.

"Do you call them 'babies' because they scream so loud?" Simpson commented.

(Simpson) Q. Have you ever photographed fingerprints before? A. Yes, in the trial of Dr. Wilkins of Long Beach, L. I., who was accused of murdering his wife. A fingerprint of his was on a lead pipe. I photographed another of his prints on a glass of water we gave him in court. The prints were alike. He was convicted.

Q. On one fingerprint? A. On one fingerprint.

Simpson turned to glance at Willie. The latter smiled.

As Drummond left the stand the defense set up a ten-foot easel in front of the judge's bench. It

Death Is Near For Pig Woman; Slight Hope Left

Death's grim angel hovers menacingly over the cot on which

Mrs. Jane Gibson, exploited "pig woman" of the Hall-Mills case, is fighting against a complication of diseases in the City Hospital at Jersey City.



Her condition is steadily growing worse and physicians this afternoon were unanimous in predicting her end within the next few days at most.

Restless and weak, Mrs. Gibson spent a poor night. Her temperature is rising steadily as her strength ebbs bit by bit. She has been unable to rally from the relapse which seized her Sunday.

The sick room is piled high with flowers, while on a chair are approximately 200 letters, most of them from strangers who have become interested in her strange career. Every other day, a bouquet comes from Charlotte Mills, daughter of Mrs. Eleanor R. Mills, the slain choir singer, whose solicitude for the state's star witness is in striking contrast to that evinced by Special Prosecutor Alexander Simpson.

Asked if he had received any word from the woman he brought to court on a hospital cot, Simpson said:—

"I don't know how she is. The doctors are sore at me."

blocked the jury's view of the defendants.

The big enlargements were set up on the easel as James H. Taylor, naval fingerprint expert, was called.

McCarter examined Taylor on his qualifications as an expert. The jurymen looked bored. They had heard all this before from Inspector Joseph Faurot, state's expert. Taylor, with a blackboard pointer in his hand, moved to the easel. McCarter stood in the witness box and asked him questions.

Simpson took a seat on the steps behind the jurors. Judge Cleary and Justice Parker settled back for a long siege.

The three state experts stared quizzically at Taylor.

Q. What experience have you had with latent prints? A. I once developed and read a print on a metal box when it had been there two months.

The prosecutor, under cover of questioning Taylor as to his qualifications, was using the expert to bolster up his own case. The print on the rector's calling card was not developed for several days

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Dr. Straton Offers To Pray for Pig Woman

"She did not lie!"

Dr. John Roach Straton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, has written a brilliant defense of Jane Gibson, the "pig woman," which appears in tomorrow's GRAPHIC as an installment of the series of articles the noted divine is writing on the Hall-Mills case.

"If Mrs. Gibson requests," he stated today, "I shall be glad to go to her bedside at the Jersey City Hospital and pray for her. She is the only heroine so far brought to light in this sordid tragedy."